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MAN'S HIGHEST DUTY

BY IRENE NYLEN

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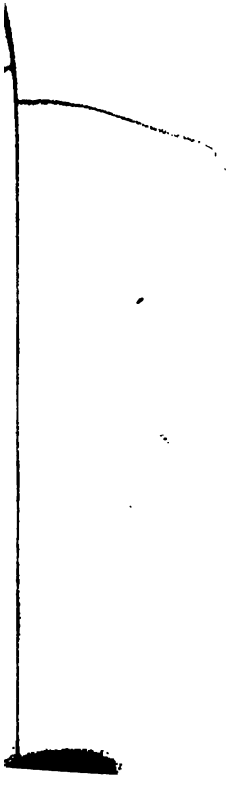

MAN'S HIGHEST DUTY

A STORY AND—A MESSAGE

BY

IRENE NYLEN

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.—*Revelation 21:4.*

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FOREWORD

In introducing this little volume to the public, I wish it understood that I am not offering it as a novel—at least not in the sense in which that term is usually understood.

For several years past I have given much time and thought to the sufferings and struggles of humanity everywhere, in an effort to understand the purpose behind it all, and I have come to believe that suffering, dissatisfaction, and struggle constitute a process whereby individuals and nations are prepared for finer and happier conditions, and higher and nobler ideals. But the old, worn-out conditions must of necessity be worked out and the way paved before the better and higher things can come.

Instead of giving out my interpretation in the form of an article, I felt it would create more interest, and strike a far more responsive chord in the hearts of my readers, if I selected a few characters, typical of our American life of today, and showed how certain problems with which we are now confronted applied to their individual lives and how they were worked out. Hence my message in the form of a short story.

New York City IRENE NYLEN

Man's Highest Duty

CHAPTER I

NORMAN HAMILTON, seated at his desk in the offices of Swetland, Inc., was finding it exceedingly difficult to concentrate his attention upon his work on a certain afternoon some months after his return from service in France. It was common knowledge that he had changed considerably; but so had practically all the men and women who had had direct contact with the recent great World War—that most horrible of all wars. These men and women realized that things could never again be as they had been, and it was this realization that had brought about the change in them.

In passing, it might be said of Norman that he was a splendid specimen of American young manhood—in age, about thirty, clean-cut, sincere, patriotic, and by his busi-

ness associates considered a wonderful composite of enthusiasm and energy, combined with earnestness and sagacity. But the thing that stood out conspicuously in his life was his love and reverence for God and God's laws.

Norman was in the employ of Allen Swetland—a living personification of SELF. Mr. Swetland, a remarkably handsome and youthful looking man despite his fifty-four years, was not only president of Swetland, Inc., a powerful machinery corporation of New York City, but a director in several financial and industrial firms in and about the great metropolis. An indomitable will, a veritable bulldog tenacity, an intellect of the highest order, the ability to turn into gold practically everything that he touched, the power of compelling absolute obedience from those in his power—these were a few of the qualities that characterized this remarkable man. And yet, withal, there was a subtle something about him that made one believe that his cold stern exterior was but a

veneer that covered a really beautiful soul —a soul as yet asleep, but awaiting the proper touch to cause it to spring into life.

Allen Swetland had a son, Clifford, and the saying "like father, like son," applied very strongly in this case. When Clifford was but two years of age his sweet and gentle mother passed away, and thus it had been an easy matter for the father to mold and train the boy in accordance with his own ideas of what his son should be. Clifford possessed to an unusual degree his father's genius for business and fully measured up to the important appellation to be found on the door of his private office—that of General Manager.

Notwithstanding the fact that in so many ways Norman Hamilton was the very antithesis of the Swetlands, he and they were very close friends. The friendship between Norman and Clifford dated from college days, and when they received their degrees in Mechanical Engineering, Mr. Swetland placed both young men in his executive

offices so that they might continue the friendship at close range. Norman's tact, popularity, initiative, and executive ability soon impressed themselves upon his employer, and in due time he earned for himself the title of Manager of the Sales Department.

* * * * *

But, to return to our story. The difficulty that Norman experienced on the afternoon in question had its root in the fact that he had caught a vision—a vision of a new heaven and a new earth—and he was sorely perplexed as to just what his duty might be in the matter. He was thinking at the moment of the Swetlands' cold and haughty attitude toward those who worked for them and their utter intolerance of everybody else's rights and opinions and ideas. Norman knew there could be no place in the new kingdom for unfairness and intolerance. In the past, when he had seen evidences of those traits on the part of the Swetlands, he had held his peace simply as

a matter of expediency, but now—his pent-up feelings refused longer to be stifled; he felt he must speak out or burst. Yes, he determined to speak out; but he would wait until the right opportunity presented itself. Relieved, now that his decision was made, he plunged into the pile of mail awaiting his signature. But he found no peace—his thoughts again became active, and again he was arguing with himself. "Marjorie is a good illustration of the way Mr. Swetland acts toward nearly everybody. She is hardly ever permitted to act on her own initiative in matters that vitally concern her. It is invariably his plan, his idea, his opinion, that is better than hers." Norman's feelings became considerably ruffled as he contemplated a matter of importance that concerned himself and Marjorie. "Here I'm madly in love with her, and it is very evident that she likes me pretty well, too. But our feelings don't seem to count at all with Mr. Swetland. He has apparently decided the case, for it is as clear as crystal that he is seeking

to force Marjorie into a marriage with Clifford. The eagle eye that he maintains over her and me, to keep us apart, is beginning to get on my nerves."

Once more Norman cast out the thoughts that were bothering him and tackled his mail, only to be interrupted a few moments later by the entrance of Clifford.

"The machine is here, Norman," he said. "You haven't forgotten, have you, old boy, that you are going out home with us tonight?"

"No, I haven't forgotten," Norman answered, "I'll be with you just as soon as I can get this mail signed."

There were no further interruptions, and Norman was able at last to finish the task before him. He then hastened to join the two Swetlands, and in a very short time the car was on its way. As it turned slowly out of the well-kept grounds, two factory employees jumped on the running board. One of them doffed his hat and addressed Mr. Swetland.

"We have been appointed a committee to speak to you about—"

But he could get no farther, for at this point Mr. Swetland peremptorily cut him short. "Don't you know that I never permit my factory employees to deal personally with me? If there is anything you wish to have brought to my attention, it must be done through the proper channels." A sharp order to the chauffeur to "go ahead, George," was then given, and once more the machine was on its way.

CHAPTER II

IN a little summer-house on the beautiful grounds of the Swetland suburban home sat Marjorie Reed. Marjorie was twenty years old, very sweet and pretty, and exceedingly innocent and trusting. At the age of five she was suddenly deprived of both parents. Her father, at the time of his death, was a department manager in Allen Swetland's employ, and to the surprise and wonderment of his friends, Mr. Swetland took the child Marjorie into his own home and ever since had accorded her the privileges of a daughter. Marjorie loved her benefactor—a love, however, that was wholesomely sprinkled with fear. Hers was distinctly a nature that required love and tenderness and understanding, certainly not the severity and the coldness that characterized her foster father. But Marjorie tried to believe that this was just "his way," for he invariably acted in a similar manner even toward his own son.

With Marjorie in the summer-house was her dearest and closest friend, Ethel Blake. Ethel had been spending a few days with Marjorie, and was about to return to her home in the next town. But before the good-bys could be said, they simply had to indulge in just one more little heart-to-heart chat.

"I wonder why Daddy always prevents me from being alone with Norman," Marjorie was saying. "I have an idea that he wants me to marry Clifford." Then, without observing the effect this remark had on Ethel, she walked over to a rosebush. Ethel followed, her heart heavy and sad. Breaking off a large rose, and pressing it to her lips, Marjorie spoke to it, rather than to her companion.

"Of course I love Clifford, as a brother, but there are times when I am as much afraid of him as I am of his father. Now Norman—" Her face lit up, as she said, "I'm not the least bit afraid of him. If only we were allowed to be alone together, I could talk to him about anything, and he would

be full of sympathy and understanding. But I guess I had better put him out of my heart, and try to love Clifford," she reflected with a sigh. "I believe that is what Daddy wants me to do, and of course I must not disobey him."

It was only then that Marjorie observed the look of pain on Ethel's face, and almost in a flash the souls of these two friends so responded that each fully understood the other.

"Why Ethel, dear, you love Clifford?" Marjorie asked.

"Yes, with all my heart and soul," was Ethel's response, as she threw her arms about Marjorie's neck and sobbed.

"Oh Marjorie, what irony! Such tangled threads! Why is it that Fate can be so unkind at times?"

Bravely, the two girls kissed each other good-by. Ethel was soon on her way home, and Marjorie did her best to forget her "cruel fate" while she awaited the homecoming of Daddy and the "two boys."

CHAPTER III

THE Swetland car was speeding homeward, and it was plain to see that Norman was in a very troubled state of mind. Mr. Swetland was so insistent in his determination to find out what was bothering him that Norman finally spoke out.

"I've been doing a lot of thinking lately about your absolute intolerance of other people's rights and opinions. The little incident of the workingmen a while ago is a case in point. It isn't so much what you say, Mr. Swetland; it is that unbearable 'holier-than-thou' attitude that surrounds your every word and act."

Undoubtedly, these words constituted an impression that many others had formed regarding Allen Swetland; but it was an impression which they preferred to keep within the secret recesses of their own minds. If they expressed themselves at all, it was certainly never in Mr. Swetland's presence. After Norman had spoken he realized that

he had done a rash thing—that at any moment a torrent of "strong words" might fall upon his head. Yet he was unafraid. The cloud passed over, however, and as no response of any kind seemed to be forthcoming Norman felt that he was free to release a little more of his long pent-up feelings.

"Don't you think, Mr. Swetland, that it would be conducive to better results if there existed a closer and more friendly co-operation between you and your employees—each side realizing and recognizing the need of the other? Please understand me: I am not referring at all to working conditions, for your factory is a model one in every way, and your workers are paid very good wages. My point is this: There is a distinct sense of resentment and hostility existing between you and your employees. It is a case of class against class, each class trying to get the better of the other. And that should not be. Why, what would happen to the one class without the other? Each side represents one half of a unit, and the two halves

constitute the perfect whole. This being the case, then why should not you and your employees clasp hands and work together harmoniously and in good fellowship?"

Even this evoked no answer. Norman wondered what had come over Allen Swetland. It was not like him at all. The only visible result of all that he had said was a very deep frown which he discerned on the faces of father and son. Norman decided to say no more just then. He was hurt and troubled over his inability to strike a responsive chord in the hearts of his two friends. Before he realized it, his thoughts were carrying him across the sea—to the battlefields of France—and he lived over again in his mind an incident with which he was familiar. There were two young men involved in the case. One was a captain—an American millionaire, a university graduate, and a member of a proud old Southern family; the other was a private—an American citizen of Polish birth, by trade a coal miner, rough and ready, but big of heart. The incident

happened at Chateau-Thierry—the place immortalized forever by American youth. The young millionaire had fallen, wounded, and was fast losing consciousness. He saw a German standing over him, with uplifted saber, ready to send him into eternity. He turned his eyes away from the horrible instrument of torture that was about to descend upon him, and then he saw—the Pole, taking aim at the German! The shot quickly followed; the American saw the Hun fall and was sure that his soul had taken flight, and that his own life had been spared—at least then. The Pole cast a quick glance at the American and beheld the look of gratitude in his eyes just before they closed in unconsciousness. The fighting went on, and men were dropping right and left. Finally, the American again opened his eyes, and the first thing he felt and saw was a body, nestled up close against his arm. It was the Pole! He, too, had been wounded, but he was still conscious and suffering intensely. The eyes of the two men met. Sympathy, understand-

ing, brotherhood—that was what each read in the eyes of the other. After that the Pole sank into a state of unconsciousness, and his companion knew that he was dying and that something would have to be done—and very quickly, too. The American pulled himself together, and found his own wound to be in the arm—a wound which, while very painful, was not serious. He lifted his dying comrade in his arms and asked God to give him strength to pay the debt he owed the Pole. Then, completely ignoring his own suffering and the danger that lurked all about him, he carried his charge to the nearest dressing station. He was quickly relieved of his burden, and promptly collapsed in the arms of an orderly. He later learned that his prompt action had saved the life of the young Pole.

Yes, war is a great leveller. Through it one realizes the unity of all life; in other words, one awakens to the fact that the life force that sustains one man is the same life force that sustains another. That life takes

no rise from a man's birth or breeding or education. It is something apart from these; it is the divine essence of God Himself. And God is no respecter of persons. This was the lesson the war had taught Norman Hamilton, and this lesson had become so vital a part of his life that it constituted an urge—an urge that he knew would fill him with discontent until he could make others see and understand things as he did.

"My war service has given me a far greater understanding of human nature than I ever had before," Norman said aloud. "I only wish you, too, Clifford, had gotten into the thick of things; it would have made you less hard, less intolerant."

Clifford now spoke for the first time. "Well, you know I wanted to get over, Norman, but it was my fate to have been kept in camp here."

After a moment of silence, he had something else to say.

"Norman, you said something about 'conducive to better results.' Could any busi-

ness methods be conducive to better results than father's? His achievements speak for themselves. If he had not ruled his thousands of shop people with an iron hand, and kept them in their proper places, do you think he would be at the very pinnacle of the ladder today? No—intellect must always rule brawn."

Each man was engaged in deep thought —each according to his own individual viewpoint.

"Gracious, Norman, I hope you are not becoming obsessed by these crazy theories one hears so much about today," Clifford continued, this time in a very sneering and impatient manner. "They are too idealistic, too visionary; they simply cannot be made to work in this world as at present constituted."

Norman clenched his teeth and hands, while Allen Swetland smiled in his delight over the way Clifford had handled the situation. He was convinced that the discussion was now at an end. But evidently he had failed to reckon with the soul of Norman

Hamilton—a soul that had caught a vision of a new order of things.

"You are quite right, Clifford, when you say 'not as at present constituted,'" Norman said. "But the present order of things is changing, and changing fast, too; don't overlook that fact."

However, the Swetlands had their own opinions about things, and refused to be impressed. Norman noticed a smile playing about Clifford's mouth. It was so supercilious, so overbearing, that it goaded Norman to the quick. In a moment he again opened fire.

"I concede your point, Clifford, that genius and intellect should hold the reins and direct brawn. But you still fail to get my point. Can't you see that each class is right in the position it occupies and absolutely necessary to the other? Granting this, then why should there not be a closer bond between the two—each side tolerant and friendly, and willing to appreciate and concede the claims of the other. In the past

capital has been selfish; in these days it is labor that has been breaking loose and acting selfishly. The two sides have simply got to get together on a basis of mutual respect and understanding."

Further argument was impossible, for they had now arrived home, and Marjorie was running toward them. Immediately Norman stepped out of the machine, she tried to sidle up to him, but Clifford cleverly forestalled her. This move of Clifford's was fully observed by the elder Swetland, and it afforded him much satisfaction, though it resulted in annoyance and disappointment to Marjorie and Norman.

CHAPTER IV

THERE was a distinct atmosphere of coolness at the dinner table that evening—a coolness which Norman clearly understood. He was fully aware that the remarks he made on the way home were very distasteful to the Swetlands; he deemed it wise, therefore, to respect their evident preference for silence. He was glad when the time came to leave the table. "Let's go out to the summer-house and have a smoke," he said to Clifford, a suggestion which immediately met with the latter's approval. Mr. Swetland then went to the library; while Marjorie, seeing no place where she seemed to fit in, ran up to her room. She felt very unhappy and lonely, for Love had been born in her heart, and she craved understanding and affection. She stood at the window and watched Norman and Clifford as they sat in the summer-house and smoked and talked.

"Daddy doesn't really understand," she mused, as she slowly walked away from the

window and curled herself up in her favorite armchair. "He thinks I love Clifford, and maybe that is why he keeps Norman away from me, thinking that possibly he may annoy me with his attentions. I ought to tell Daddy the truth—that it is Norman I love." She forthwith proceeded to give the question careful consideration, and in a few moments her decision was made. "I'll go down and tell him now," she said.

And so, too innocent to entirely understand the moods of men, she picked out the worst possible moment to broach the subject she had in mind.

* * * * *

Mr. Swetland had been having a most uncomfortable time with himself in the library. He had worked himself into a bad temper—Norman of course being the target. "That young Hamilton felt big because he had the field entirely to himself on the way home tonight. I was in no mood to argue with him then, but—" He lifted a celluloid paper cutter from the library table,

fingered it for a moment, and then bent it, almost to the point of breaking. "Yes, I'm going to take that young man in hand at once, and thoroughly convince him that my business was a big success long before I ever met him. I'll bend him to my way of doing things, or out he'll go."

It was at this inopportune moment that Marjorie came down. She was delighted when she saw that Daddy was alone.

"May I come in, Daddy?" she called out, in her sweet way. "I have a secret I want to tell you."

The sudden interruption served to anger the "lion" still further, and he literally roared at her. "A secret, what do you mean? Come in here and sit down."

Marjorie tried very hard not to get frightened. Very hesitatingly, she answered the question put to her.

"Well, I have an idea you think I love Clifford—but, well I don't; that is, not to marry him. Norman Hamilton is the one I love, oh so much, and somehow I feel that

he loves me, too. I thought I ought to set you right. Now that you understand, Daddy, you won't keep Norman and me apart the way you have always done?"

All the while Marjorie was speaking, the war clouds were gathering in intensity on Mr. Swetland's face. When she had finished, he jumped up, and, placing his hand firmly upon her shoulder, he addressed her.

"Marjorie, are you trying to lay down the law to me?"

Letting this take time to sink into the heart of the now thoroughly frightened girl, he continued.

"Years ago I decided that you should marry my son. To my great satisfaction, I have been observing that Clifford, of his own accord, has apparently grown to love you, and I thought you, too, loved him. However that may be, you are now going to hear my ultimatum, since you have seen fit to force the issue.

"You shall marry Clifford on your 21st birthday!" Every word of the ultimatum

was emphasized by a pound on the table with clenched hand. "Now you know full well that when I say a thing I mean it—that I allow no one to question my decisions!"

Like a helpless lamb before the shearer, Marjorie opened not her mouth; she got up to leave the room, but before she had reached the doorway, she heard another ultimatum from "the master."

"Another thing. You are not to make any attempts to be alone with Norman. Understand? Now go to your room."

Marjorie obeyed. When she reached her room she closed the door, and threw herself on the bed. She felt that the world was slipping from under her feet. She was blinded by her tears; her heart ached; her dream was shattered. As for Allen Swetland, he paced the floor, grimly satisfied that since he had now laid down the law he would be obeyed.

Norman and Clifford now returned to the house. "Where's Marjorie, Dad," Clifford asked. "She went upstairs—to cry, I sup-

pose, because I had found it necessary to reprove her," Mr. Swetland answered, in very curt tones.

Norman looked at his watch and decided it was time to bid his hosts good-night. In a little while he was speeding homeward. His thoughts were busy regarding Marjorie. He wondered what it was that made it necessary for Mr. Swetland to administer a reproof. Somehow, he felt that he had something to do with it, because when Mr. Swetland spoke of reproving her he directed his remarks straight at him. Norman recalled how Marjorie tried to sidle up to him that evening as if she had something to say to him, and how Clifford cleverly prevented it, to the apparent satisfaction of his father.

"I can't understand it," Norman said to himself. "Mr. Swetland and Clifford between them always manage somehow to prevent me from being alone with Marjorie."

It angered him as he contemplated this fact. "I am going to find a way to talk with

her alone, that's all. I love her, and if I find she really cares for me, and not for Clifford —well, Allen Swetland is not going to keep us apart after that."

CHAPTER V

AS the days passed by, Norman realized that a clash with Mr. Swetland was imminent. Certain issues would have to be clearly defined, and the air cleared, before Norman could hope to find peace within himself once more. He made the mental reservation, however, that he would not precipitate the clash until he was satisfied that he could be complete master of himself and the situation. These were the thoughts that were engaging him one afternoon at the close of business when a cheerful voice was heard, simultaneously with the opening of his door.

"Oh Norman, father and I are going to remain in the city tonight for a game of billiards at the club. Want to join us?"

"No thanks, not tonight, Clifford," was Norman's answer, as he proceeded to arrange his papers, preparatory to leaving the office for the day.

That night, in his home, which, by the

way, was situated about two miles down the road from the Swetlands', Norman was engrossed in his evening paper, when a sudden inspiration came to him. "Why, here is my chance to have a talk with Marjorie without interference," he said. "I hate to do a thing like this behind their backs, but I think the case demands and justifies it." Then, after a moment, "yes, I'll do it."

As soon as his decision was made, he called Marjorie on the telephone, and told her he wanted to see her at once, if possible. The poor child trembled from head to foot. She longed to have Norman all to herself for a little while, but how she feared to tell him to come!

"Oh I am afraid, Norman. After the other night, I dare not—oh please don't come."

"You mean you don't—"

"No," Marjorie interrupted. "I don't want you here tonight. I'll be very angry if you come."

Then she quickly closed off, with the reali-

zation that she had made a mess of the whole thing. "Oh dear me," she said ruefully. "I've let the cat out of the bag. Of course Norman will want to know now what happened the other evening, and there's bound to be trouble if he finds out."

Norman was very much disappointed at the way Marjorie met his overture. He had fully expected that she would welcome the opportunity to see him alone. "She blurted out something about the other night. I must have been involved in some way. I'd love to know." He thought of telephoning her again in the hope that she might change her mind, but upon second thought he decided not to. "I'm going to her anyway, and if I should run into Mr. Swetland—well, I guess the clash must come some time."

Marjorie was far from comfortable. In her secret heart she wished Norman would come despite her protest, and so she watched at the window, in rapture one moment, in fear the next.

Within twenty minutes from the time

Marjorie closed off, Norman was at her side, thanks to his trusty roadster. He settled down to business immediately. "Marjorie," he said, "something happened between you and Mr. Swetland. Tell me: did I figure in the matter in any way?"

Silence.

"Marjorie, won't you say something? You can trust me. You know that, don't you?"

"Oh Norman, please don't press me. I can't tell you what happened. I can't."

Norman did not need any further evidence of his connection with the matter. Everything was very clear to him now.

"All right, girlie. You needn't explain. I understand it all."

Neither spoke again for quite a while.

"Marjorie, we may as well understand each other," Norman finally said. "An opportunity like this may not occur again for a long time, and I think it wise that we take advantage of it. I love you. I want you very much, and if you say you care for me

I'll fight for you. Be frank, Marjorie, and tell me just how you feel regarding Clifford and myself. It will clear the air for many things."

These words were very precious to Marjorie. Her heart fairly thrilled, and in her evident happiness Norman knew he had the answer he wanted. Marjorie's new-found joy entirely dispelled her fear. She became strong and courageous, and anything seemed possible to her now. In a few moments, she was telling Norman the whole story of what occurred on the evening in question—how she plucked up courage to tell Mr. Swetland the true state of her heart, and how it resulted in the ultimatum that well-nigh crushed out her life.

"And oh, Norman, Daddy made it so clear to me that I was never under any circumstances to make an attempt to be alone with you. You know now why I was so afraid to have you come here tonight?"

"Yes, dear. But you must not worry about the matter any more. Everything

will work out for the highest happiness of all concerned."

Marjorie and Norman were beginning to thoroughly understand each other at last, and, because of this fact, they proceeded at once to formulate plans for future action—while Mr. Swetland and his son, in happy ignorance of the momentous conference going on under their roof, continued to enjoy themselves at billiards at their club in the city.

"Now do just as I say," Norman was telling Marjorie. "I think it best that you go away for a few days. In that case I would have a clear field to work out our problem in my own way. It would certainly complicate matters if you were present."

"Very well. I'll do anything you want me to, Noman," Marjorie answered.

In a little while their plans were all made, and they decided to forget everything and just be happy together for a few minutes. Marjorie was the first to realize the passing of time. "Please, Norman—maybe you had

better go now; it is getting late, and we must not let Daddy catch us if we can help it."

The good-bys were soon said, and on the way out Norman generously tipped the servant in return for a promise of secrecy regarding his call. He hurried into his roadster, put on full speed, and was hardly more than a hundred feet down the road when he recognized the Swetland car homeward bound. To his intense relief, the Swetlands were so busily engaged in conversation that they never looked his way at all. "My, but I had a narrow escape there," Norman reflected to himself.

* * * * *

Marjorie was all ready to carry out her part of the plot. As soon as she heard footsteps on the stairs, she quietly opened her door, and, in a somewhat plaintive voice, called out, "Daddy, will you come in for a moment?"

Mr. Swetland stepped into her room. "Well, what is it?" he asked, in rather a sharp tone.

For a moment Marjorie hesitated. Mr. Swetland's peremptory tone was enough to cause all her courage to vanish. "Well," she finally said, "so many things have happened recently that I feel somewhat nervous and upset."

"Oh, now, that's too bad," Mr. Swetland said, as Marjorie paused. Encouraged, she went on,

"I've been thinking that a few days' visit with Ethel Blake might do me a lot of good. You know how full of life she is; she'd make me feel happy again. May I go to her, Daddy?"

"Why of course, child. Call up Ethel in the morning, and go at once," Mr. Swetland answered, stroking her hair, and giving her one of those rare demonstrations of affection that revealed the real man underneath.

"I guess Daddy was a little too severe the other night," he continued. "Now be a good girl, and try to realize that what I desire for you and Clifford is for your good and his, and you will soon be happy again."

For the moment Marjorie entirely forgot her recent unhappiness, and the ultimatum that led up to it; she knew only that her usually stern and unsympathetic foster father was now treating her kindly and lovingly, and satisfying her innate craving for affection and understanding.

"Oh Daddy, how tender and loving you can be when you want to!" she exclaimed, as she hugged him with all her might.

Daddy, all smiles, bestowed his good-night kiss, and as he walked toward the door it was evident that he was very happy and very much relieved. He was fully convinced that Marjorie's behavior was an indication of obedience to his wishes. At the door he paused, and then turned to her and said, "You have always been very obedient, Marjorie; I knew you would be in this case also."

CHAPTER VI

THE next day was a very trying one for Norman. Between the momentous conference he had with Marjorie the evening before, and the many important business matters that came up for attention, he found himself hard pressed. A matter that troubled him considerably was that of the selection of a new assistant manager for his department. He paced the floor, his hands in his pockets. While thus engaged, Clifford happened in. Observing Norman's evident annoyance over something, he asked what it was. And Norman answered readily enough.

"Oh, it is the same old question—Smith's successor. Smith, as you no doubt know, leaves tomorrow, and although I have recommended Jack Weston to your father on several occasions, he has as yet done nothing in the matter. His failure to act is inconveniencing me greatly. You can understand that, can't you?"

"Yes, I can," Clifford answered, thoughtfully. "Norman, let this thing drop just for the present. I'll try to take it up with father tonight, and I'll put in a good word for Weston; I agree with you that he should have the post."

But after Clifford had gone, Norman's impatience overruled him, and he decided to make another attempt to have the matter settled at once. He called Mr. Swetland on the telephone, and asked time for a conference.

"I can give you a little time right now," was the answer.

When Norman reached his chief's office, he was disconcerted at finding Clifford there also. However, he managed to hide his discomfort pretty well, and was about to make a remark when Mr. Swetland's telephone bell rang.

"Oh, hello, Marjorie," Mr. Swetland said. "Well, you got there all right, did you? . . . Be a good girl now. . . . Yes. . . . Good-by."

Turning to Norman, Mr. Swetland explained the call. "Marjorie left home today for a few days' visit with Ethel Blake, and she just telephoned me of her safe arrival there. Marjorie told me last night she wanted to get away and have a little change, so the trip was arranged rather hastily."

This was a piece of news Norman wanted to hear, but of course he was very careful not to betray himself in any way. Inwardly, he was pleased beyond measure that Marjorie would be at a safe distance when he had his "siege" with his employer. In a moment, however, his inward glee turned to a panicky fear. He was sure he detected a glint of triumph in Mr. Swetland's eye, and the thought came to him that Mr. Swetland may have again threatened Marjorie and succeeded in exacting some promise of obedience from her.

"Well, Norman, what is it you wish to speak to me about," Mr. Swetland finally asked.

"Oh," Norman ejaculated, having been

rather suddenly awakened out of his reverie. "I wanted to ask if you had come to any definite decision regarding Jack Weston."

After several moments of silence, Mr. Swetland got up and began to pace back and forth. Norman realized now that there was going to be trouble over the selection of his new assistant.

"I'm sorry, Norman, but I cannot O. K. your candidate; I have one of my own," Mr. Swetland finally said, in that imperious way so characteristic of him. "Gerald Simpson is to have the job." Following this emphatic declaration, he resumed his seat and took up some papers, an action which to Norman meant that the case was settled—as far as Mr. Swetland was concerned.

Clifford, up to this point, had refrained from taking any part in the discussion, but now that he foresaw trouble, he quietly but quickly made a move toward the door. Catching Norman's eye, he beckoned him out, hoping thus to prevent further friction. But his efforts were unsuccessful, for Nor-

man did not intend to let the matter rest in any such unsatisfactory state.

Deeply in earnest, Norman again addressed Mr. Swetland. "Surely, you don't mean to put a man like Simpson at that desk —a man who, as far as I can see, never takes any real interest in his work, and whose authority would never be respected by those under him. He has been in your employ but a few months, is extremely independent, and comes and goes and does just as he pleases, all because of his influence with you. He is not at all the man for that position."

Mr. Swetland apparently was not paying the slightest attention to what Norman was saying, for he kept on working while Norman talked.

"But Jack Weston—he has been in your employ for ten years; he is a hard worker, is well liked and respected, and is exceedingly ambitious and resourceful," Norman went on, refusing to be phased by Mr. Swetland's indifference. "Weston has earned every right to a promotion, and I am under the

impression that he fully believes this position will be offered to him."

Mr. Swetland at this point threw down his pen and wheeled around in his chair. His eyes fairly blazed at Norman. The truth of the matter was that despite his apparent inattention he had been taking in every word Norman uttered.

"This is the second time within a week, young man, that you have seen fit to tell me how my business ought to be conducted." After a moment's pause, possibly to give his temper time to cool down a bit, he went on. "I am not going to argue this case with you, but I'll say this: Gerald Simpson is the son of my lawyer and close friend. I promised to advance the young man in every way, and I intend to do so, regardless of whether it pleases or displeases any one. As for Jack Weston, I am under no obligation to him whatever."

Norman realized the futility of trying to move the man. He got up and walked slowly toward the door. As he was about to pass

out, he turned and said, "In other words, Mr. Swetland, you want me to understand that where the question of personal pull is involved, efficiency and faithful service are considerations of secondary importance?" The door was then closed, and Norman was gone.

Throughout the entire discussion, Clifford had been a silent, though interested listener. His sympathies in the case were entirely with Norman, but his training had been too thorough to permit him to try to alter his father's decisions once they were made.

CHAPTER VII

THAT night, immediately after dinner, Norman went to his room. His manhood was stirred as it never was before. Injustice, unfairness, and bulldozing were so foreign to his nature that whenever he saw evidences of those qualities in others he was hurt beyond measure. He went to his wardrobe and took out the uniform that had seen service abroad. His eyes fell upon the letters U. S. on the collar, and the realization of all that those letters stood for caused him to impulsively crush the uniform to his breast. He also noted with a feeling of pride the insignia denoting the branch of service he enlisted under—the Engineer Corps—and the single bar on the shoulder indicating his rank—that of lieutenant. Norman put the uniform aside, and, as he did so, he suddenly became aware of a peculiar, subtle pain in the left side of his neck, extending down through the arm. He walked over to the window, to think. Then he paced the

floor. The problem he was trying to work out in his mind was becoming clearer with the passing of every minute. Suddenly, he stopped. "Ah, now it is all clear," he exclaimed. "I understand everything. That uniform, my service abroad, and this ever-recurring pain stand for something. They constitute a message that it is my duty to deliver to my fellow-men. And the first one on my list is Allen Swetland!"

From that moment Norman Hamilton was a man with a message. And he determined that he would give out that message regardless of what it might cost him to do it. "Yes, I'll begin with Allen Swetland," he said. "And I'll do it now, this very night."

CHAPTER VIII

IN the Swetland home, father and son were engaged in earnest conversation. "Son, I am afraid we and Norman are at the parting of the ways," Mr. Swetland was saying. "I won't stand for the way in which he talks to me lately. Why, his boldness in questioning my decisions and methods of running my business is out of all bounds. He certainly has changed, I must say that."

Clifford, plainly annoyed at what he believed to be an unjust attitude on his father's part toward Norman, answered, "Yes, Norman has changed—to an extent. But regarding certain of our policies, I feel pretty safe in saying that he has never really been in sympathy with them. In the past he seemed to prefer to maintain a discreet silence, whereas now he is beginning to speak out."

For the next few moments Clifford was wrapped up in reminiscences. Then he again addressed his father.

"Practically from the beginning of my friendship with Norman he has cherished certain ideals, and it is my belief that his recent war experiences have served to crystallize and shape them toward a definite end—"

Clifford was interrupted at this point by the entrance of a servant, who announced that Norman Hamilton was calling. Instinctively, Mr. Swetland felt that Norman's call was for no ordinary purpose. Norman now came in, greeted his friends with the courtesy that always characterized him, and then proceeded to make himself comfortable in a cozy armchair. But he soon realized that it was not easy to begin the delivery of his message. It was Mr. Swetland who finally broke the uncomfortable silence.

"You seem to have something to say, Norman. What is it?" The "ice" broken, Norman answered, "Yes, I have something to say, but first I want to ask a question of you and satisfy myself as to a certain matter. It

is about Marjorie. I love her—but I know Clifford loves her too. Well, then, why can't I have an equal right with him to try to win her, with Marjorie as the final arbiter?"

Clifford's face clearly indicated his feelings—a mixture of disappointment, anger, and jealousy. Never before had he fully realized that he had a rival to be reckoned with. He looked straight into Norman's eyes, and Norman met that gaze unflinchingly. In the meantime Mr. Swetland had jumped up. His face was livid with anger. With his teeth and hands clenched, he fairly hurled at Norman these words:

"*I* intend to be the 'final arbiter' in this case! Everything Marjorie is and has today she owes to me, remember that. Years ago I decided, for reasons of my own, that Marjorie should marry my son. I have been gratified to observe that Clifford of his own accord has grown to love her, and I see no reason why she shouldn't be able to love him. Why, there isn't a mother's daughter for

miles around here who wouldn't jump at the chance of marrying Allen Swetland's son! However, I have now spoken. My word is law; it always has been, and I intend it always shall be!"

Clifford was deeply humiliated—and distinctly alarmed. He knew full well what was impending—a rupture between his father and his closest friend. For Clifford it must in fairness be said that he was capable of a far greater sense of justice and right than one would imagine. It was true that he kept the finer emotions pretty well under control as a result of the severe training he had undergone at the hands of a strict and imperious father, but he was as yet too young to be altogether hardened. He walked over to the window where Norman was standing, and, putting his hand upon his friend's shoulder, made a mute appeal for silence. Norman of course fully appreciated Clifford's trying position, but he would not—could not—let it interfere with the purpose he had in mind. So he could

only shake his head and thus indicate to Clifford that his appeal could not be granted. Sorrowfully, Clifford walked away and rejoined his father, while Norman realized that the time had come when he must speak. He therefore proceeded to marshal his inner forces, in order that he might give his message dispassionately and without the slightest tinge of malice. When he felt he was ready, then he, too, walked slowly back to his chair and sat down. Finally he spoke.

"Mr. Swetland, have you ever stopped to realize that in this universe there are higher laws than those laid down by man? Has it occurred to you that the recent horrible European war, which drenched the world in blood and plunged it into almost unbearable suffering and sorrow, was brought about because for centuries misguided man had been running things according to his own laws without reckoning on God and His laws?"

The slow, quiet, and earnest way in which Norman asked these questions had the effect

of curbing Mr. Swetland's ruffled temper; his eyes were fastened upon Norman's face, and it was evident that he was giving the speaker his closest attention.

"For hundreds of years greedy, incompetent, and unscrupulous European kings and rulers oppressed and crushed their helpless subjects, and bred in their hearts hate and bitterness and suspicion toward all other races and nationalities," Norman continued. "It was therefore an easy thing for those kings to stir up trouble and thus bring about war after war and constantly sacrifice human life. And what was the underlying purpose of most of those wars? Was it to vindicate some noble ideal? No—it was that those kings might display their vast power and satisfy their greed!"

After a moment's pause, Norman went on.

"Was it any wonder, then, that ultimately the entire continent of Europe should become a huge battleground—to the end that man might be brought to a realization that

the laws of God are mightier than the laws of man?"

Mr. Swetland by now had become restless. He was distinctly ill at ease. "Good gracious, Norman, what has all this got to do with me?" he asked. "Surely I was in no way responsible for the war, nor for Europe's sins during the past two thousand years."

"No, of course you weren't," Norman hastened to answer. "But don't you see the analogy? Are you not, in your particular sphere, also exercising tyranny and laying down the law to those in your power?"

Norman stopped here—and sighed. He was fully cognizant of the fact that thus far there was no visible evidence that his words had made the slightest impression upon Mr. Swetland. After a moment or two, he again spoke, very earnestly.

"Can't you see what I am driving at, Mr. Swetland? Oh, if I could only make you see and feel things as I do! The age-long hatred, intolerance, and bitterness must give

way to the spirit of love, tolerance, and kindness; old habits and beliefs must make way for new ideas and higher ideals. This is the new order that Nature is now ushering in, and any one, high or low, who, because of selfishness, resists or fights against this new order will be swept aside and literally crushed like chaff, but the one who understands and works bravely with it, to that one shall be given the privilege of beholding the new day, and receiving the reward promised in Revelation 21:4!"

At this point Norman's emotions completely overcame him. But in a few moments he was again master of himself. He removed his coat and collar and tie, and rolled up the left sleeve of his shirt, revealing to the wondering gaze of father and son a long, deep scar, the remains of what had once been an ugly and undoubtedly very painful wound. A similar scar was to be seen on the left side of his neck, extending almost to the shoulder.

"Why Norman," Clifford exclaimed, "you

never told us that you had been wounded."

"No," Norman answered, and then went on to tell how, while engaged upon a piece of temporary bridge construction, an enemy shell had burst overhead, wounding him and several of his comrades.

Impulsively, Clifford grasped Norman's hand, but he could not utter a word. No word was necessary on Clifford's part, for Norman felt his friend's sympathy. In a voice shaking with emotion, Norman said, "These wounds constitute the price *I* paid to help bring about the new order of sympathetic tolerance toward all."

Placing his hand on Mr. Swetland's shoulder, he then made his final appeal. "Won't you fall in line with the spirit of the times and do your part toward establishing on earth the Brotherhood of Man? Let me tell you, my friends, that upon America—God bless her!—because of her high ideals and wonderful achievements, rests the noble task of laying the foundation for this glorious consummation."

Replacing his collar and tie and coat, Norman walked slowly toward the door. Clifford followed.

"Norman," he said, in a somewhat shaky voice, "I admire and respect you more this minute than I ever did before. No matter what happens, you and I will always be friends, won't we, Norman?"

An earnest handshake, given with a look of unmistakable meaning, was Norman's answer.

"Oh, another thing, Norman," Clifford again said. "I want to do the right thing regarding Marjorie; you know that, don't you? I didn't fully understand until tonight just how things stood. I am perfectly willing that you should have an equal chance with me, leaving to Marjorie the final decision."

Mr. Swetland, meantime, seemed totally oblivious of the fact that Norman had stopped speaking and was leaving for home. He sat slouched in his chair, and his face

bore all the earmarks of a stubborn temper and an unyielding will.

"Good-night, Mr. Swetland," Norman called out. "With such a brilliant intellect, and such a personality as you have, what a force for good you might be!"

With those words, Norman passed out, and Clifford returned to his father's side. Not a word was spoken by either man. After a silence lasting fully five minutes, Mr. Swetland finally got up, and began to pace the floor. Suddenly he stopped, and, turning upon Clifford, said:

"I must have been a fool to permit Norman to talk to me the way he did. I don't know what has come over me lately; this is the second or third time I have allowed it." Then, after a slight pause, he gave further vent to his ruffled feelings, "Huh! The impudent young fop!"

Clifford realized that his father was in one of his dangerous tempers, and that silence on his part was golden just then.

"For heaven's sake, Clifford, say some-

thing. Have you no feeling at all in the matter? Can't you see that an insult to your father is an insult to you?"

Still Clifford hesitated. It must not be thought that his silence indicated cowardice. Not by any means. He, too, had a full measure of the Swetland fighting blood, but always it had been his desire not to stir it up unless he felt the occasion absolutely demanded it. In this instance, because of the circumstances of the case, he had hoped that by an attitude of non-resistance his father would cool off more quickly and thus make it possible for peace to be restored all around. But now that he was forced into saying something, he would speak according to his own convictions and take the consequences.

"Father! I don't regard as an insult anything that Norman said here tonight. I think he has a wonderful understanding of the spirit of the times, and I admire him for the courage he is displaying in giving out what he sees and feels. Norman has always been visionary and idealistic, and I admit

that there have been times when he has angered me considerably; but tonight, somehow, he impressed me greatly. Really, I am proud to call him my friend!"

"Oh stop it, Clifford," the father interrupted. "I hate those words 'dreamers' and 'idealists,' and if I thought Norman was trying to turn you into a rainbow chaser, I would throw him out of my employ and forbid him my home. As for you—well, I would be ashamed to call you my son!" Letting that take time to sink in, he went on, "I believe in dealing with the present and with what I can see before my own eyes, and I think my tremendous success proves that it is the practical man who is the benefactor of the race, and not the idealist."

Clifford was relieved to observe that his father had calmed down to an appreciable extent, and he therefore felt free to continue a discussion that was proving very interesting to him.

"Yes, of course you are right according to your point of view, father. But then—

there is something to say for the other side, too. I remember an argument I had once with Norman, relative to this very subject. He quoted somebody—to the effect that 'dreamers and idealists are the immortals and saviors of the world.' He said that every advancement, no matter in what line, every blessing, every privilege, we have today we owe to some dreamer, some idealist. You know, father, when you really stop to think about it, Norman is right. The dreamer dreams, and has nothing but his faith to assist or guide him in what he is trying to do. It is usually his unhappy fate to have everybody against him; he is misunderstood and hated; and frequently goes to his grave a broken man. But the day always arrives when the dreamer's dream becomes the reality. Then, along comes the 'practical man.' He accepts the blessings and the privileges the faith of the dreamer made possible; adapts them to his every-day needs; appropriates them in building up his vast business enterprises; grows rich and powerful;

and the world looks on and calls him a benefactor of the race! Human nature has some queer streaks, that's certain."

"Well, now, I guess we've said enough on the subject of idealism for the present," Mr. Swetland made answer. "You just sit here and dream, son. I'm going up to my room. Good-night."

"Good-night, father," was all Clifford could say to this.

CHAPTER IX

WHEN Mr. Swetland was finally alone with himself, he realized that he was somewhat shaken by the very emotions he had long trained himself to stifle. He sat for a long while in deep thought—thought that led him back to his young manhood—and then went over to a corner in the room and opened a small private safe. He took out a number of articles that were very precious and sacred to him—articles that had once been the personal possessions of his wife. Mr. Swetland's love for his young wife had been a beautiful thing. He had married her in his early twenties, but after three short years of the greatest happiness together, she had passed away, the manner of her passing being most tragic. And when the one whom Allen Swetland loved most in all the world went out of his life, the light in his soul went out also.

One of the articles Mr. Swetland had taken out of the safe was his wife's Bible,

and its well-worn condition plainly indicated that it had been in constant use during its owner's life-time. Because this Book had been so much a part of her life, Mr. Swetland pressed it to his lips, and he felt that she was very close to him now. After a few moments, he opened it, and, by a strange coincidence, it happened to be at the book of Revelation! The word Revelation immediately brought to his mind something that Norman had said earlier in the evening. Rather mechanically, yet with a slight tinge of inquisitiveness, he turned to Chapter 21. Running his finger down to verse 4, he read:

> And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

He closed the Book, slowly and thoughtfully, and then said, musingly, "So that is the reward Norman spoke of this evening." Something of compassion, something of the old feeling of tenderness, seemed to well up in his heart.

The articles were finally replaced in the safe, after which Mr. Swetland consulted his watch. In so doing his eye fell upon the photograph which was in the case—that of his beautiful young wife. As he looked at it his face was soft and kind and his eyes moist. "Yes," he said, "she, too, believed that a new kingdom was about to be set up on this earth. Her whole life was a living example of her great love for humanity. Why, she even gave her life—" Suddenly, the tragic fate of his dear one flashed across his mind. His face now became as hard as steel, and the tenderness that had temporarily possessed him vanished completely. He closed the watch with a snap, clenched his hands, and fairly hissed between his teeth, "I'll never give in, no, never—to Norman Hamilton or anybody else. I had all of these altruistic tendencies and brotherhood ideas once, but I was cured—and cured thoroughly!"

* * * * *

The next morning found Allen Swetland

at his desk as usual. He was in a very irritable frame of mind, and it was quite apparent that he had had a very restless and sleepless night. The first thing he did, after reading his mail, was to call in his secretary and dispose of the morning's dictation. After that he called Norman on the telephone, and told him he wished to see him at once.

Wondering what might be in store for him, Norman obeyed the summons.

"Sit down, Norman," he heard Mr. Swetland say, in his customary peremptory way. Norman did as he was requested, and then waited for his employer to speak, which he did very shortly.

"Well, young man, I called you in here to tell you that what you said last night made no impression upon me at all. Now I don't want you ever again, in my presence, to question my methods of running my own business. You've got some beautiful ideas, Norman, but I don't expect to see them carried out in my lifetime; therefore, I don't

intend to waste my valuable time planning and working for the comfort or well-being of future generations. Let them look out for themselves!"

"Such utter selfishness!" Norman exclaimed. "Do you realize that the blessings you enjoy today are the result of the toil, the sacrifice, and the unselfishness of men of the past—for instance, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Abraham Lincoln, and others? They fought and suffered and literally gave their lives for the ideals and principles they believed in. Did they do all this that they might themselves be benefited? No—they knew full well that they could but lay the foundation for a new and better order of things, leaving it to future generations to enjoy the fruits and benefits of their labors. Your forefathers paved the way in order that you might be what you are today; yet you selfishly say you care nothing about the welfare of those who come after you!"

"That's enough, Norman," Mr. Swetland

interrupted. "Now, to go back where I left off. The second thing I want to bring to your attention is this: What I said about a marriage between Marjorie and Clifford still stands. I expect you to abide by the decision I have made. You understand?"

Norman found himself experiencing a most intense inner conflict. His love for Marjorie was one of the deepest things in his life, and Marjorie had assured him that that love was fully reciprocated. It was not easy for a young man of spirit to hold back his feelings in the face of such arrogance, such selfishness, and such a total disregard of other people's rights. He paced the floor agitatedly, in an effort to understand the stiff-necked stubbornness that had characterized Allen Swetland ever since he had known him. Finally, he again sat down at his employer's side.

"Mr. Swetland, I want to ask you something. I realize that I shall be treading on very personal ground, but if you will answer me, it will help me to understand many

things. Has anything ever occurred in your past to account for your present attitude toward other people and their rights?"

It was now Mr. Swetland who got up and paced the floor in great perturbation. He pulled out his watch, and again looked at the face of the young woman therein. It was several moments before he spoke, and when he did so, his voice was hard and almost rasping.

"Did Clifford ever tell you how his mother died?"

"No," Norman answered. "I asked him once what caused his mother's death—I think it was soon after I met him. His face clouded, and he said that he would rather not discuss the subject. Naturally, I inferred from that that there was some sad or unusual circumstance connected with her, but I never referred to the matter again, either in Clifford's presence or yours."

After a short interval of silence, Mr. Swetland showed Norman the picture in the case. "That is Clifford's mother," he said,

in a voice that was now full of love and tenderness. For a few seconds, Norman had a glimpse of the real Allen Swetland—the Allen Swetland that had long been hidden from the world.

"Well, I am going to tell you about her," Mr. Swetland said, as he put the watch back into his pocket, and again became the man familiar to Norman—the man cold, stern, unsympathetic.

"Her name was Helen. She and I were married shortly after I finished college. She was a beautiful and charming girl, brimming over with life and love for every living thing. Like you, she had some wonderful ideals, and believed that if the Brotherhood of Man could become a reality among men, it would cure the world's ills and hatreds.

"The only dark cloud on her horizon was her father, the owner of a large steel mill. She loved him devotedly as a parent, and he idolized his daughter, regarding nothing as too good for her; but as an employer he was a cruel and hard taskmaster. He ruled his

working people with an iron hand, and they retaliated by hating him and 'doing' him every time they got the chance. Nothing that Helen said or did to change his attitude toward his workers made the slightest impression upon her father. He told her it was business—something a woman should not meddle with.

"To go back a little: After I graduated I secured a position in a machinery corporation. At that time I was full of altruistic ideas, and determined that in all my dealings with others I would live up to the Golden Rule—'do unto others,' etc. I remember that on the day before our wedding Helen made me promise on my honor that if ever I became an employer, or was placed in a position of authority over others, I would give my people a square deal and treat them with fairness and kindness always.

"She did all she could to palliate her father's misdeeds by visiting in the employees' homes whenever she heard of cases of need. She constantly aided them, financially and

morally, and was loved by all because of the quiet and sincere way in which she did things. Our marriage in no way lessened her interest in her father's workers.

"In time Clifford came—to further increase the happiness of our home. Within a year after his birth, I was made assistant manager of the department in which I worked, and in every way I lived up to the promise I made to Helen just before I married her.

"Then, one day, after three years of perfect paradise together—the great tragedy came. I had hardly left for business that morning when a message came for her, saying that the little daughter of one of her father's mill workers was dangerously ill, and asking if she would please come at once. Of course she went—immediately. When she reached the place, she was appalled at what she saw and learned. The child was dying, and the mother had not sent for a doctor because she had no money. Helen discovered, also, that there was scarcely a bit

of food in the house. The mother explained that the father had been away from home for three days. He was 'on a spree' she said. My wife immediately called our own family doctor and put him in charge of the case. After he had concluded his visit, Helen gave the poor woman every cent she had in her pocketbook, amounting to about $20.00. She did all that she could for the time being, and promised to come again the next day. She was just about to leave when the father happened to come in, very drunk, and looking very menacing. He at once began to quarrel with his wife, and she in turn upbraided him for acting like that when his child was ill and the 'boss's girl' in the house. Mention of the presence of the 'boss's girl' greatly infuriated him, and, grabbing a chair, he was about to let it down on his wife's head when Helen stepped between them to intervene and thus received the full force of the blow on her own head. Of course she was killed instantly. Later, when I knelt at the body of the dearest thing in life to me,

the body bruised and dead at the hands of one whose family she had befriended, something in me died. I felt that my rights as a husband had been foully trampled upon, and it filled me with bitterness. And when I thought of my baby boy at home, left motherless because his mother had tried to save some one else's baby, my bitterness was further increased.

"From that time on I've never cared whether I trampled on other people's rights, if they in any way interfered with mine. My motto has been, 'every man for himself;' you know how the saying goes.

"Well, that's my story, Norman. I'd like to mention that you are the first one I've told it to since I laid my wife away in her grave. I never wanted to talk about the matter to any one."

The story that Mr. Swetland told made a profound impression upon Norman Hamilton. His whole heart and soul went out to the man beside him. He laid his hand upon

that of his employer, let it rest there for several seconds, and then pressed it hard.

"Yours was indeed a real tragedy, Mr. Swetland," he said. "Now that I know about it, it helps me to understand you as I have never understood you before. As for yourself, I believe you are going to feel differently, now that you have let this thing out. You have been going through a form of repression for twenty-eight years, and the longer you had permitted this canker to eat into your soul the harder and more selfish you would have become. You can trust me with what you have said, Mr. Swetland, and I shall pray that the light may again shine in your soul and reveal to the world the real Allen Swetland—the Allen Swetland your wife must have known while she was here."

Norman decided that this was the psychological moment to return to his desk. But before he had reached the door, he heard Mr. Swetland say, "Come back here, Norman. I wish to speak with you a little further."

Norman again seated himself. "Do you

think I have been very wrong in the attitude I have assumed, when you consider the circumstances?" Mr. Swetland asked.

Norman would have preferred not to answer this question—just then. He didn't want to say anything that might irritate the man just at a time when he felt he had struck a responsive chord somewhere. Yet he certainly would not go against his convictions.

"Well," Norman said. "I admit you were cruelly wronged. But the man who perpetrated that foul deed was under the influence of liquor at the time and not in his normal senses. However, that does not absolve him; he has to answer to God, not only for the crime he committed, but for the sins that led up to it. That is the view you should have taken of the matter. 'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord. Instead of doing that, what have you really done? Why, all these years you have hurt and punished and disregarded the rights of many. You didn't even spare yourself. Don't you see—you have been making the innocent

pay for the wrong-doing of this one man. Is that just, or fair? Do you think your noble wife, who gave her life for others, has approved of your course? No, I don't think so."

Norman spoke all through in a voice that was soft and pleading. His sole purpose was to reach down to the very depths of the man. "Say, Norman, do you really think my wife knows?" Mr. Swetland asked, in an excited tone.

"Yes, I do," Norman answered thoughtfully. "I firmly believe that our loved ones who have passed on are always near us in spirit. I am sure my mother and father are close by. At least it makes me happy to feel that they are. They brought me up to love God and the right, and since they've been gone I have tried to do what I thought they would want me to do. Yes, I believe our loved ones are near to guide and help us. This feeling has been a great comfort to me many, many times, I can tell you."

CHAPTER X

THAT night Allen Swetland was confronted with probably the greatest problem of his life. Unquestionably, Norman had accomplished his purpose of bringing this man face to face with his own soul.

The battle cry had sounded. The opposing forces were ready and eager for the fray. On the one side was the devil, and on the other Norman Hamilton, with Allen Swetland as the arbitrator.

"Remember, Allen Swetland," said the evil one, "that in this world, as it is constituted today, my way is the only way that really gets you anywhere. 'Every man for himself,' that's my motto. If other people's rights conflict with mine, why I just rough-shod right over them. What are their rights, compared with mine, anyway?"

"Yes," this from Norman Hamilton. "That's all perfectly true, of course. But those methods belong to the era that is passing and must give way to a higher and nobler

attitude—the attitude that realizes that we protect our own rights best when we protect those of our brother."

The first skirmish was over. "Who wins, Mr. Arbitrator?" asked His Satanic Majesty.

"Why, I think you are right," answered the arbitrator. "I have proved your way. It is not easy to change to something that doesn't seem workable in this present everyday world. The old way seems second nature."

"Ah," laughed the evil one. "Good for you. You stick to me and to my way, and I'll stick to you closer than a brother."

But now came another gun from the other side. "I warn you, Allen Swetland. Listen to these words, and take heed. The old order must go, and make way for the new kingdom of love, tolerance and unselfishness. Any one, high or low, who resists or fights against this new order will be swept aside and crushed in the process, but the one who understands and works bravely with it, to

that one shall be given the privilege of beholding the new day and entering the new kingdom!"

And thus, all through the night, the fight went on in Allen Swetland's soul. The tortured man jumped out of bed and looked at his watch. It was 6:30, Sunday morning, and he realized that another long night had passed without a wink of sleep. He paced the floor. He felt nervous and cross, and looked very haggard and worn. "Oh God, Oh Father in Heaven, I can't stand this much longer. My conflicting emotions are driving me mad." Then, "Helen, Helen, if you are near, have pity on me and help me. Everything is so black."

It was here that the door opened and Clifford walked in. He had been awakened by the movements in his father's room, and decided to investigate. He was appalled at the condition in which he found his parent, and pleaded with him to see a doctor.

"No, no, Clifford," was the impatient answer. "Get me one of those sleeping pow-

ders—you know the ones the doctor prescribed for me a while ago. I've got to get some sleep. After that I shall be all right."

Clifford quickly carried out the instructions that had been given to him. He then assisted his father back to bed, remaining at his side until he knew the sleeping potion had taken effect.

CHAPTER XI

ALLEN SWETLAND was in the midst of a very troubled dream. He found himself groping along a strange country road. He put his hand up to his eyes, and cried, "Oh, where am I?" And an answer came back to him, "You are in the land called SELF. Every one here lives for himself and his own selfish interests, and you are our king."

When the voice had ceased, and Mr. Swetland had removed his hand from his eyes, he found himself surrounded by men and women of all classes, rich and poor, capitalist and laborer. He pushed on—and on. Suddenly everything changed. He was now in the midst of a gorgeous setting—on all sides were beautiful flower gardens, fountains, and carefully laid out walks. A little ahead of him he saw a marble stairway. He mounted this, and at the top he beheld a magnificent throne, above which appeared the words, "Allen Swetland, The Great I,

Ruler of the Kingdom of Self." Very listlessly, he seated himself, and, as he did so, he saw that he was now attired in the elaborate habiliments of a king. Before him were his "adoring and worshipful subjects," one of whom carried a banner inscribed, "We serve none but ourselves and Allen Swetland, our king. His word is law, and that law is supreme." Plainly, the king was very unhappy and troubled and weary. He waved his people away, and immediately they dispersed.

"Oh, I am so tired of everything," the king cried. "To think of it—I have wealth, position, and power, yet I am miserable and discontented. And these insincere and selfish people—they pay me homage, yes, but in their secret hearts they hate and revile and envy me!"

He jumped up, threw off his ermine robe, seized his crown of jewels, and then cast both emblems of his power far from him. "Oh God, I am so helpless," he moaned, as he sank back into his seat. "Is there nobody

to help me, nobody to give me strength and courage to break away from all this?" Almost out of nowhere, a young man appeared before him. His face was handsome, compassionate, kind, yet indicative of an inner strength and power. The king looked up at the young man in amazement.

"Who are you, and where did you come from?" he asked.

"My name is Norman Hamilton. I heard your sincere cry for help, and so I came," the young man answered. "Come, let me lead you away from this place of Self to a better land."

The king was like clay in the hands of the younger man. He was now perfectly willing to leave all and be led. They walked a short distance, when suddenly the air became filled with the shouts of men and women. The king turned and saw that he was being followed by hundreds of his subjects.

"Don't leave us," they were saying. "With us you have wealth, power, pleasure

—everything. If you go away from here, certain destruction awaits you."

The king and his young companion were now surrounded by the shouting and beseeching mob. One of the men tried to attack Norman, telling him that "you are a traitor to our king and to us. We are stronger than you, and you shall not take him from us." By one fearless look in the eye, Norman completely silenced the man.

For some reason the king had suddenly become suspicious of Norman, and believed now that he was aiming at his life. He motioned the young man away from him, saying, "Begone, you seducer. I am going back with my people. I know what I have now, but I don't know what awaits me if I go with you."

The men and women wildly cheered this utterance, and as the king was about to return with his people, he heard these words from the companion he was now about to desert. "You cried for help, and I came. I offered you my companionship in order that

together we might seek the Kingdom of True Happiness. And now—Very well, I go on alone. Farewell."

The king stumbled along behind his subjects, but there was no peace for him. The old struggle was on once more, and he heard the inner indictment: "Fool, you proved for yourself that the things the world loves do not in themselves bring happiness or contentment. I sought to help you, that you might find the true source of happiness and peace and plenty. Well, go your way—misguided, self-willed, and deluded man!"

The tortured, soul-torn king turned and saw that the distance between himself and the young man was becoming greater moment by moment. His better self was again in possession. Making a bold and determined effort, he ordered his subjects to go on and leave him to his fate. He ignored their shouts of derision and scorn, and walked quickly, until, panting for breath, he was at Norman's side.

The two journeyed onward, and were

greatly impressed by the beauties and wonders of Nature—the towering mountains, the winding valleys, the glittering lakes, the gigantic trees, the fields upon fields of wild flowers, and that most wonderful of all sights —the sunset! Tired, as a result of hours of tramping, they sat on a rock to contemplate the gloriousness of it all.

In silence, the wayfarers resumed their journey. Although wellnigh worn out, the king plodded along uncomplainingly, but wondering at the strength and endurance of his young companion. Suddenly, a sound of music fell upon their ears. Continuing in the direction whence it came, they soon found themselves in front of a stone wall, built very high, and now they knew that the music came from behind that wall. It was a blast of trumpets they heard, as if heralding the approach of a king. As they stood in front of the wall in wonderment, the trumpets finally ceased, and a voice, rich and clear and resonant, was heard: "Behold, another standeth at the Gate of Renunciation

of Self. All hail!" A loud peal of the trumpets followed, the huge gate swung open, and a man, garbed in a flowing white robe —a man upon whose face one could literally read the words love and compassion—stood before them.

"Allen Swetland," he said, "are you now ready to renounce self and all its selfishness? Are you willing to lose your life that you might find it?"

Very earnestly and reverently Allen Swetland answered, "I am."

"Then enter this gate, and you shall behold The Christ," he was told.

As Allen Swetland entered the gate, there sounded forth another peal of the trumpets, and the white-robed man then turned to Norman, and said, "Norman Hamilton, you have been found worthy; you, too, may enter."

The two wayfarers walked down a pathway strewn with roses and leaves, and on either side of the path stood men and women, all in spotless white robes, blowing their

trumpets in welcome. When they had walked a short distance, they saw ahead of them a platform, covered, as it were, with a carpet of leaves. On the platform stood a beautiful maiden, in a simple white robe, her long wavy hair hanging about her shoulders. At the approach of the newcomers, she gracefully threw out her arms and smilingly beckoned them to come up to her. As they did so, the trumpeters fell in and arranged themselves in front of the platform, and Allen Swetland now recognized in the maiden—Helen, his wife!

"Allen, my dear, I welcome you," she said. "I have waited, and prayed, all these years, that you might find yourself. Now you have done it at last, and I can be happy—and free to do the work I want to do here. But, of course, my dear, I shall always continue to watch over you." She then began to sing:

"Rejoice, rejoice, another soul has returned to the Father's house."

The trumpets pealed forth, as if to join

in the glad refrain, and again the air was filled with song:

The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.*

At the conclusion of the song, the maiden fell upon her knees, bowed her head, and

*Psalm 24.

closed her eyes. Her example was followed by all the others, and almost immediately they were completely enveloped in a cloud. When the mist had finally cleared away, and the people had opened their eyes, they saw on the platform the form of Jesus, The Christ. He looked lovingly into the upturned faces before Him, and then said, "Arise, my faithful watchers, and behold your Lord." In speechless awe, the faithful ones arose, and listened attentively to Him as He said:

"Nearly two thousand years ago I came to this earth in order to teach men the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. But the people of that day were too selfish and engrossed in the pleasures and cares of this world to understand my message, and so they persecuted me, and reviled me, and accused me of blasphemy. Before I went away, however, I warned Man of what would happen if he failed to heed my words."

A look of pain was discernible on the face of Jesus. "My children," He said, "this is

the prophecy I uttered nearly two thousand years ago, and which is now being fulfilled in this day:

Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man

in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand.*

These significant words of The Christ made a profound impression upon His listeners, and while they quietly discussed the prophecy with one another, the Man of Sorrows walked toward the rear end of the platform and closed His eyes. His thoughts carried Him far across the sea, where He beheld the fulfillment of the first part of the prophecy which He had uttered many centuries ago. He saw the blood-stained battlefields of Belgium, Italy and France, and on them thousands upon thousands of little white crosses to indicate but a few of the

*St. Luke 21:10, 11; 20-22; 31; St. Matthew 24:21, 22; 29-31.

lives that were sacrificed; cathedrals razed to the ground; villages laid waste; thousands homeless; and great suffering, poverty, and disease everywhere. His thoughts traveled still farther—to terror-stricken Russia, where hatred and bitterness reigned, and where they killed and plundered one another with as much ease as they walked the streets. And then there was Armenia—poor, bleeding Armenia! He did not wish to dwell long on the horrible sights He saw there.

All the things He saw, the Man of Sorrows realized, were the result of the insatiable greed, gross materialism, and intolerance of a long line of kings and rulers—the cunning, avarice, and treachery of them all culminating in the person of the man who is accused of being the chief instigator of the great World War. Putting His hand up to His face in an effort to shut out all the distressing scenes and recollections, The Christ exclaimed, "Oh you, who call yourselves kings and rulers by divine right, hear me:

Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

But so shall it not be among you: (my disciples) but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*

The Great Teacher now returned to the front of the platform, and asked God to bless His followers, after which He charged them to,

"Go back into the world, my beloved, and await my coming. Warn the people everywhere; tell them to let not their hearts be overcharged with the pleasures and cares of life, lest the Prince of Peace come upon them unawares. The dawn of a new day is here, and a new heaven and a new earth shall appear for God's faithful ones everywhere."

*St. Mark 10:42-45; St. Matthew 23:12.

Again the trumpets pealed forth, and again the maiden sang,

"And a new heaven and a new earth shall appear for God's faithful ones everywhere."

"But prepare—and watch," The Christ continued, "for ye know not the hour nor the day when the Son of Man shall appear!"

As the last words of Jesus were spoken, the people were again enveloped in a great white cloud, and when all was clear once more, they discovered that their Lord had vanished, and—Allen Swetland found himself emerging from a most remarkable dream.

His face was soft and tranquil, and as he became somewhat accustomed to his surroundings, he saw that Clifford was seated at the side of his bed.

"Oh father, I am so relieved. You have been asleep so long, and there were many times today when you caused me much anxiety."

"Why, what has really happened to me?"

Mr. Swetland inquired. "I don't quite understand."

"Don't you remember, father? You were not well this morning; you took a powder, and later fell into a profound sleep. I have been watching with you on and off all day. The first part of the time you evidently suffered a great deal, but this afternoon you suddenly became calm and quiet, and it seemed to me, from the expression on your face, that you might be having very pleasant dreams. In fact, you looked so very peaceful that for a while I thought you were gone. I got the doctor here quickly, and then sent for Marjorie and Norman. The doctor left about an hour ago, after assuring me that you were only in a deep sleep and would be all right when you awoke."

Mr. Swetland sat up and passed his hand over his forehead. Yes, it was all clear now. He smiled broadly, and Clifford was fairly amazed at the softness of a face that he always knew before as serious and stern and unrelenting.

"I am all right now, my boy. Tell Marjorie and Norman to come up here. I want to have just a word with you all."

The three young people were soon gathered about the bedside of Allen Swetland. For several moments he looked straight into Norman's eyes, and then said, as he grasped his hand:

"May God bless you, Norman, for all you have done for me. Not one man in a thousand would have kept on pegging at me the way you did. I kicked against you, and almost hated you for the things you said. But your words finally seared into my very soul, and I suffered so much that I cried out to God to have pity on me. Well, today I had a most inspiring dream. The experiences I went through are too sacred to talk about, but I just want you all to know that I can never again be the Allen Swetland you have known. The whole dream was symbolic of the phases through which we all pass when we turn from the lower self, and all its brood, to the Higher Self, and the things of God.

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Through our sufferings and our struggles we are cleansed of sin, and the way is thus paved for the finding of The Christ spirit within. And for every one that pays the price and finds it, all the angels of heaven rejoice. I know!"

The young people were greatly impressed. As Norman listened to Allen Swetland, one could almost feel the thrill that was passing through his inner being—a thrill of joy that he was instrumental in awakening the soul of this man. As for Marjorie, she was shedding tears of gratitude over the fact that the Daddy she always feared was now filling her with happiness and peace; while Clifford, trained from his boyhood to look upon emotion as something to be absolutely avoided by the masculine sex, was finding the ceiling particularly attractive; it was an able ally in helping him not to "disgrace" himself by doing such an "effeminate" thing as shedding tears.

"Leave me now, my children," Mr. Swetland finally said, "and tomorrow I shall take

steps to set myself right before God and man." As they were about to pass out of the room, Marjorie could restrain herself no longer. She returned to her Daddy and threw her arms about his neck, kissing him time and again. The surprised but happy man pressed the girl to his breast, and for the first time, probably, realized the strong hold Marjorie had upon his affections.

CHAPTER XII

DADDY SWETLAND and Marjorie were enjoying each other's companionship before the fireplace in the library. In their little world just then all was quiet and peaceful, but outside—it seemed that all the demons of hell had been let loose. The lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, and the rain fell in torrents. Norman and Clifford stood over at the window watching it all. Clifford was fascinated; the wonderful pyrotechnics interested him greatly. To Norman, however, the whole thing was fraught with meaning; to him it was symbolic of the world's suffering today. As he pondered this fact, he again became aware of that constantly recurring pain in his shoulder and arm. It was an ever-present monitor to remind him of the part he must play in the world's great present-day drama.

"Yes, yes," he remarked rather musingly to Clifford. "The whole world is in travail, for it is being born again that it might begin

life anew. The old individual selfishly regarded himself as the whole, thus separating himself from the rest of humanity; but the new birth is lifting the individual out of his self-created shell and making him realize more and more that all humanity is the whole and he but one constituent part of that whole. When man fully awakens to this fact he will realize his unity with, and responsibility to, his fellow-men, and thus make possible the establishment on earth of the Brotherhood of Man."

After a silence lasting some moments, Clifford made answer to this.

"Norman, I think I am beginning to see things as you do. There have been, and still are, many wrongs in this world of ours, and I can see now that Nature is seeking to work out all these old wrongs and lift man to a higher and nobler plane of action."

These words, coming as they did from his closest and dearest friend, were a source of great satisfaction to Norman.

"What a pity it is, Clifford," he said, "that

so few have caught the vision of this grand plan of the Creator! Humanity everywhere, because it fails to see and understand, is putting forth a mighty resistance to every form of change, and filling the air with complaint and harsh criticism of the few who do understand and are working valiantly and unselfishly in behalf of the ideals and principles they believe in heart and soul."

Slowly and thoughtfully the two young men walked away from the window and joined Mr. Swetland and Marjorie at the fireplace.

"Well, now that we are all together," Mr. Swetland finally said, "I want you to know why I was so bent on bringing about a marriage between Marjorie and Clifford.

"Fifteen years ago, Marjorie, your father, a graduate engineer, was a valued employee of mine. He had been at work for some time upon an invention—a special type of electric motor. I had fitted up a small room for him off in a corner of the factory, and there he worked every night

after his daily duties were done. I followed his work with the greatest interest, and promised to back up his invention in a financial way, if, when completed, it proved worth while.

"One afternoon he came to me and said, 'Well, Mr. Swetland, the thing is finished, and ready to be shown to the world. I have never spoken a word to any one about this invention except to you and my wife. I preferred to wait until I was sure it would be a success.'

"That night, on my way to the club, I happened to pass his home, and some impulse made me stop and go in. It was then that I saw you for the first time, Marjorie. I remember taking you on my knee and saying, 'Child, your father is a very clever man, and before long you will be in the kind of home, and surrounded by all the beautiful things, that your nature demands.' You just laughed in that sweet and innocent way that has always characterized you, and threw your arms about me.

"In making my departure, your father accompanied me to the door. As I said good-night and shook hands with him, he said, 'I am so glad, for my wife's sake, that my invention is completed. She isn't strong —it's her heart. Several times I wanted to drop the thing so that I could be with her more, but she refused to let me do so. Her spirit all through has been just wonderful, and let me tell you that from now on—well, I won't consider anything too good for her!'

"I could see plainly that he himself was not looking any too well; he seemed completely worn out.

"The next afternoon we had another talk. I said to him, 'I prefer to buy that invention of yours outright so that I can have it patented in my name. What do you think?' He interposed no objection to that idea, so I went on. 'Then, after we get things going, I'll of course agree to a further payment to you of a percentage of the profits.'

"My plan met with his entire approval, and we thereupon agreed to draw up the

necessary papers the next day, as it was then closing time. As he was leaving my office I remarked: 'Just as soon as we get this matter fixed up, Reed, you've got to go away for a while and rest up.' He thanked me and said my suggestion was a very good one.

"On his way home, however, the tragedy occurred. Presumably, he was seized with a severe attack of dizziness, for he fell, striking his head against an iron railing with such force that his skull was fractured. He was quickly removed to a hospital, but he died that same night, without regaining consciousness. I had been notified, and remained with him to the end. Your mother's grief, Marjorie, was pitiable. I offered to take her home in my machine, but before I could get her out of the hospital, she collapsed completely. The suddenness of the whole thing was a great shock to her—a shock that proved disastrous to her weak heart, and she, too, passed away the next day.

"Later on, in trying to decide what course to pursue regarding the invention, I real-

ized that with your mother's death I was the only person living who knew a thing about it. I rehearsed to myself the facts that I had supplied your father with the room he worked in and all the materials used; that before his death he had verbally consented to having the motor patented in my name; and that the task of raising the necessary funds to push its manufacture would be up to me. Those considerations finally led me to the decision that I could rightfully claim the invention as my property—provided I did my full duty to his child. That was how I came to take you into my home, Marjorie. I have always treated you in every way as I would my own daughter, but I did you the great wrong of making you believe you were entirely dependent upon me, whereas you had every right to everything I have ever given you."

At this point in his narrative Mr. Swetland had to stop. He buried his head in his hands, to hide the shame he felt. In a few moments, however, he went on with his story.

"That motor proved to be a great thing. It has had a large part in making my business and my fortune what they are today. It was because of my desire to keep that money in the business and in the family that I determined you should marry my son. As his wife I knew your future would always be provided for; and at my death of course everything was to go to you and Clifford. If that plan had worked out I could have carried my secret to the grave, knowing that I had done my duty. On the other hand, I stood full ready, if it proved absolutely impossible to bring about a marriage between you and Clifford, to tell you everything and give you a check covering your share on the day you left my home as the wife of some other man."

The ordeal, while it lasted, had been a trying one for Mr. Swetland; but now that it was over with, he was glad and relieved that he had unburdened himself of a secret which many times had pricked his conscience. As for the young people, their admiration

for the man who was courageously seeking to undo the mistakes of his past was plainly apparent. In Marjorie's heart there was nothing but love and forgiveness. She went to him and sat on the arm of his chair, stroked his hair lovingly, and then said:

"Daddy, I have no cause for complaint. You have always been good to me in your stern way, and have provided me with all the luxuries and advantages I could possibly have wished for."

Next, she turned to Norman and Clifford, and addressed them. "Daddy must be allowed to keep his secret. Promise me, boys, that you will never repeat a word of his story to any one. This matter is nobody's concern but ours, especially mine."

Having secured their promise, she again turned her attention to Mr. Swetland. "Please, Daddy," she said, "I want everything to remain 'in the business and in the family' just as it is. I have every want satisfied; so don't, Daddy dear, say anything further about 'my share.'"

CHAPTER XIII

ALLEN SWETLAND was again back at his desk. Every member of the office force, from the lowest to the highest, was aware of a great change in him. Gossip, of course, was rife as to what had brought it all about. He carried himself with the same dignity; radiated the same strength of character, and commanded the same high respect; yet there was about him such an atmosphere of kindness and good will that his subordinates could now approach him with the greatest ease and confidence—not in "fear and trembling" as heretofore. The news that "something had come over Mr. Swetland, and he was now a different man," had sifted through to the factory, and thus the workers there were intensely interested in a notice which had been posted to the effect that Mr. Swetland would address his factory employees at 12:30 on Wednesday—something he had never done before.

Mr. Swetland and Norman had just concluded an important conference, when the former happened to think of another matter. "Oh, by the way, Norman, I don't suppose you've done anything regarding your new assistant. I have given further consideration to that subject, with the result that I've changed my mind about Simpson. I quite agree with you now that Jack Weston has earned the right to that post, and if you will bring him in some time this afternoon we can settle the thing then."

"I am indeed glad to hear this," was Norman's answer. "My department has been greatly handicapped lately, and I am pleased beyond measure to have the matter settled. I'll tell Weston about it at once. He'll be tickled to death."

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It was Wednesday—and the time, 12:30. The north side of the factory building of Swetland, Inc., was fairly jammed with workers, eagerly awaiting the appearance of the president. Promptly at the time desig-

nated, the door opened and Allen Swetland stepped out and faced his employees, followed by Norman and Clifford, who took their positions a little to the rear. Mr. Swetland gave one sweeping glance over the entire crowd; that glance was so full of the spirit of brotherliness that every man and woman in the crowd reacted to it, with the result that a great rousing cheer for Allen Swetland was spontaneously given. When quiet was restored, the president began his address.

"My workers:" he said. "No doubt it is a great surprise to you all that we should be together like this. However, I have made the decision that from now on I am going to deal directly and personally with my working people. To that end, I intend to inaugurate monthly meetings in order that I might come before you and discuss questions of interest to all of us."

The employees crowded closer, eagerly intent upon catching every word.

"Today I would like to take up with you

some very broad and general questions. This will help us to understand each other more fully. Now, first of all, I want to ask if any of you have tried to look into or interpret the war and the unrest and confusion now prevailing throughout the entire world."

These men and women realized that their employer had touched upon something that was vitally affecting them, and they wanted to hear what he had to say about it.

"You know, people," Mr. Swetland went on, "we cannot stand still. The world is ever in a process of evolution, with Nature seeking constantly to destroy what is evil and putrescent in order that the way might be paved for what is good and clean and healthy. Mankind today is ready for a higher step in its evolution, but before man can enter upon this newer and higher phase of his existence, he must first work out the old wrongs and pay his debt. Then he is ready for the onward march—and not before. Now the recent war, with all its suf-

fering and sacrifice and sorrow, and the present chaos and unrest, constitute the process whereby old wrongs, old ideas, and old customs are being gradually sloughed off and replaced by newer and happier conditions and higher and nobler ideals. When you fully understand this, can you not see how necessary it is for us to work with Nature in her desire to upbuild, and not against her? Should there not be less grumbling and kicking and criticising while the painful process is going on and more willingness to co-operate with it and thus shorten it?"

Many guilty faces were discernible in the crowd, for the reference to grumbling and criticism struck home.

"One of the things the new order will bring about is a closer relationship, a clearer understanding, between capital and labor. The long-standing quarrel that has existed between these two bodies is a veritable canker that is eating through to the very life blood of the nation. Now I am going to call

that canker by its right name; it is—individual selfishness! that quality which we all agree is so very detestable in others, but perfectly normal and correct in ourselves. Selfishness absolutely must be rooted out of the human heart, and the Golden Rule strictly adhered to on both sides before we can ever hope to bring about amicable relations between these two important organizations. But, as I said, the new order is going to bring about an adjustment all around. Labor will then no longer be regarded as a commodity, but as a vital living thing; and capital will not be looked upon as a curse—as a soulless monster without feeling or justice—but as the power that makes the wheels go around."

An intense silence followed these significant statements, after which Mr. Swetland continued:

"Now, on the side of employer and capital, I promise right here to spare no effort to make the conditions under which you work as agreeable as possible; I will pay you the

highest wages compatible with output; and I will stand ready at all times to welcome suggestions from any of you that will result to our mutual benefit."

These promises evoked vociferous applause. Every one seemed to be in a splendid and happy mood, and cries of "Go on, go on; we follow you, Mr. Swetland," were heard from many quarters.

"On your side, that of labor—and please mark me well—I shall expect the same fairness that you ask of me. There must be common-sense, square-dealing, and fair-mindedness on your side, too, remember."

Shouts of "That's right, we must be fair, too," followed this declaration.

"There are just one or two more points I would like to bring out. I want you to bear in mind this vital fact—that everything we are passing through today is a preparation for the establishment on this earth of the Kingdom of the Brotherhood of Man. We are all brethren, remember, all children of the one Father. I consider it man's highest

duty today to put forth the best that is in him in order to help bring about this Brotherhood within the shortest possible time."

After a few moments of reverent silence, Mr. Swetland went on.

"And we Americans, because our ideals are so high and so unselfish, have unquestionably been chosen to lay the corner-stone of this glorious Kingdom!"

Simultaneously with this statement, a brand new Star Spangled Banner was unfurled to the breeze. Pointing to it, in reverence and love, Mr. Swetland closed his inspiring address with these pregnant words:

"That blessed flag! Let us make it loved and honored in every country in the world—that it might teach Mankind the lessons of Love, Equality, Justice, Liberty and Progress. This is America's destiny, and let no one attempt to stay its course!"

Every eye in that vast assemblage was fastened on the Emblem of Freedom and Love, and so intense was the throbbing of

every heart that for some moments not a movement was discernible anywhere in the crowd. Mr. Swetland finally broke the spell and re-entered the building, an example which was followed by Norman and Clifford. The men and women, too, quietly dispersed and returned to their work.

CHAPTER XIV

SIX months had rolled by, and Marjorie and Norman were engaged. As for Clifford, he was fast adjusting himself to the fact that "Marjorie was not for him." The fight had been a fair one, and Norman had won out.

One evening, after dinner, Marjorie and Ethel Blake—the latter was spending a few days with her chum—took a walk about the grounds, and in so doing they observed Clifford alone in the summer-house, looking decidedly pensive and troubled.

"How happy I could make Clifford if only he would give me the least opportunity," Ethel confided to Marjorie.

Marjorie gave her friend a look that was full of love and sympathy. She hardly knew what to say, so they just walked on. Then, quite suddenly, an idea came to Marjorie.

"Ethel dear," she said, "I want you to walk on alone. Go toward the house—anywhere, only keep out of sight for a few min-

utes. I am going to have a talk with Clifford."

"Oh no, Marjorie," Ethel protested. "Please, I'll never forgive you if you give him an impression that I am seeking him."

Marjorie quickly assured her friend that her wishes would be respected, and in a moment she was gone. She soon reached the summer-house, and sat down at Clifford's side. She looked at him closely. How well she knew that pensive look.

"I am so sorry, Clifford," she finally said. "I know you cared, but Time heals everything. We'll always love each other—as sister and brother—won't we, Clifford?"

Clifford took her hand and pressed it. He couldn't speak just then. Marjorie understood. She wanted so much to say the right thing—something that would start his thoughts moving in another direction, and thus lift him out of his depression. In a few moments she had the thing worked out.

"Listen, Clifford," she said, giving him one of her sweetest smiles. "Here is

something for you to think about. My woman's intuition tells me that your real love mate is hovering very near. Her name is Ethel Blake, and I have no hesitation in saying that she would make the dearest, sweetest, and most charming little wife ever. But you must wake up; such a prize as she is is bound to be snatched up before long."

With these shots, naively hurled, she quickly left him, and almost ran all the way to the house.

CHAPTER XV

MARJORIE'S wedding day, which day also happened to be her twenty-first birthday, was close at hand, in fact it was but two days off. When Mr. Swetland left for the office that morning, he had given Marjorie an imperative "command" to be at his office at 4 o'clock that afternoon. And so, in obedience to that command, she arrived at the place and time stated, to find Norman there, too. When the preliminaries were over with, Mr. Swetland smiled and winked at Norman, the meaning of which was, "you tell her all about it." Radiantly happy, he did so.

"Say, Marjorie," he said, "Mr. Swetland has been treating me so royally that I don't know whether I'm on my feet or on my head."

He thereupon proceeded to take some papers out of his inside pocket, whistling merrily all the while. He showed them to her. "Stocks in the company, $100,000

worth," he said. "But oh, boy, that's not all. How's this—two additional departments have been placed under my direct supervision, with a resultant large increase in salary. Isn't 'our Daddy' just great, Marjorie?"

Not a word could Marjorie utter; her flashing eyes and beaming face spoke louder than words. Mr. Swetland smiled broadly, and then beckoned her over to him. She obeyed, sitting on the arm of his chair.

"Does my little girl think that Daddy has forgotten her?" he asked. "Look here."

He handed her a large envelope, and, opening it, she found—stocks in the Swetland Co. to the amount of $200,000.

"Your wedding present from Daddy," Mr. Swetland said.

Next, he handed her a box, and in this she found a heavy rope of pearls. "For your twenty-first birthday," again said Daddy.

Marjorie was overwhelmed with happiness. She threw her arms around Mr. Swetland's neck, and exclaimed:

"You great big darling Daddy. I great-

ly appreciate these generous gifts, but oh, Daddy, you—my new, my reborn Daddy—are the very 'bestest' wedding present of all!"

At this point Clifford came in, and thus had an opportunity to share in the happiness of the prospective bridal pair.

"Oh, by the way, Margy," Clifford remarked, "I just had a chat with Ethel over the telephone. She said she would be at the house about the time we got there."

Marjorie turned to Norman and gave him a knowing little wink. "I guess we'd better keep an eye on our lovesick best man and chief bridesmaid on Thursday, or they may spoil our ceremony. How about it, Norman?"

A good laugh at Clifford's expense followed, after which Mr. Swetland settled back in his chair and closed his eyes. Plainly, he was a very contented and happy man. In a musing sort of tone he said, "People talk of heaven and hell as places they think we go to after we pass out of this life. As

for me, I believe now that heaven and hell are the states we create for ourselves while here. With your love, my children, with the respect and confidence of my employees and my friends, and, above all, with nothing standing between me and my God, I can say this is heaven right here and now."

Norman fully agreed with what had been said, and was about to say something, when Mr. Swetland got up and walked over to the window. He watched his employees as they left the factory for their respective homes.

"We're all a happy family now," he again musingly remarked. "I was just thinking that if The Christ should suddenly make His appearance here among us, would He find us worthy to be gathered into His New Kingdom? I wonder."

Silence followed this reflection, a silence which Clifford finally broke by consulting his watch. Joining his father at the window, he softly remarked, "I imagine the machine must be waiting, father. Shall we go now?"

And so, in a few moments, these four peo-

ple, whose lives were so closely intertwined, left the office, quietly and thoughtfully, and were soon speeding toward the home where perfect love and happiness and understanding now reigned.

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